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THE CHIEF LITERARY PRODUCTIONS IN ISRAEL BEFORE THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM.

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The view of Kittel—Grounds for rejecting it: (1) the widespread use of writing; (2) recorded history.—Detailed consideration of (1) Proverbs; (2) The Psalmody of David; (3) The Law of Moses, with justification for the rejection of the view of the dominant modern school of critics.

THE dominant school of critics affirms that Israel did not enter the ranks of the literary nations until the time of Solomon. According to the liberal estimate of Kittel, before the schism there had been committed to writing, the song of Deborah, the decalogue and book of the covenant, the narrative which serves as the foundation for the last five chapters of the book of Judges, and perhaps the blessing of Moses and a few histories of national heroes like Gideon and Abimelech. The same writer also believes that official chronicles of the kings were kept from the reign of David onward, and that in Solomon's time old songs were collected under the title of the Wars of the Lord and the Book of Jashar. He thinks also that David doubtless took an active part in the beginnings of religious poetry in Israel. But Kittel is conspicuous for his generous allowance of literature to the period before the division. We cannot claim as much as he does without meeting with serious dissent. The distinguished leader of the modern school, for example, dates the blessing of Jacob in the ninth century; admits the existence of the Ten Commandments in the early period, but doubts whether they were written on tables of stone; and ascribes the book of the Covenant, in its final form, also to the ninth century, making it a growth out of decisions of the priests. The chief literary productions before the division of the kingdom may accordingly be described as a written

song or two, principally in celebration of heroic achievements, a few prose narratives of similar import, the beginning of the royal annals, and some scraps of legislation gradually increasing in amount.

With these meager results we are dissatisfied. And at the outset for two general reasons: 1. The widespread use of writing. The Babylonians for long ages, and the Assyrians for at least four hundred years, before this time had been writing the history of their times and committing legal and ritualistic matters to documents. In Egypt, Thothmes and Ramses had set an example to the Israelites in their midst of recording the events of war, and Pentaur, of celebrating victory in song. The Hebrews were face to face with writing for all matters worthy of record, small and great. And it is from the time of the sojourn in Egypt that writing is first mentioned as practiced by the Hebrews. According to the records Moses, either himself or through a scribe, wrote (Ex. 17:14; 24:4; Num. 33:2; etc.); Joshua and other leading men of his time wrote (Josh. 8:32; 18:9; 24:26); later Samuel, also, and David wrote (1 Sam. 10:25; 2 Sam. 11:14). The Hebrews conquered Canaan and, according to the teaching of the dominant school, imbibed the culture of the Canaanites. Yet it was customary for the rulers of petty Canaanite states and cities, whether native princes or foreign officials, to write or have the assistance of a scribe. The Sabeans of Southern Arabia used writing. Moabites, who had neither the wealth nor the great history, nor the great ritual of the Hebrews, wrote records, as Mesha's monument of the ninth century attests. Thus the Hebrews, from the days of their great progenitor down through the centuries of their tribal existence and afterwards as a nation, were in constant contact with people who wrote. Yet we are to believe that during these long years, and despite the stimulus of an eventful history, the Hebrews were practically without literature. The Hebrew authors of the later period claim to use old documents. Assyrian scribes constantly do the same thing and are believed. Why should we not believe biblical writers when they refer to the chronicles of Solomon or the book o

Gad the seer, or a document of Moses? 2. The theory of the dominant school can only be carried through by rejecting the recorded history. This is commonly done under cover of the declaration that the Hebrew Scriptures are "tendency" writings. They are tendency writings only in so far as they are intended to unfold the religious teaching of history. This purpose is avowed by biblical writers (*e. g.*, Rom. 15:4). But there is no evidence that a single recorded event was manufactured or a single historical fact exploited. In notable contrast to the literature of contemporary peoples, the Hebrew records state the naked truth whether it be to the honor or dishonor of the nation. Documents of neighboring nations, contemporary with the events and indelibly written on brick or stone, are extant from the moment of the division of the kingdom, and they have established the trustworthiness of the Hebrew records. There usually is a difference between the two accounts in the point of view, and occasionally the details are contradictory; but, as Schrader has stated and as every investigator knows, "the historical narrative of the Bible is as a whole confirmed." The main facts of the history are attested back to the very beginning of the two kingdoms, when, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak invaded the land. For the age before the exodus the background of Babylonian and Egyptian history in the book of Genesis is also established as a true picture of the time. Under these circumstances the Hebrew records for the intervening period, from the descent into Egypt until the division of the kingdom, deserve at least respect. Now it is to the recorded history that the Graf-Wellhausen theory is unable to adjust itself. Graf, for example, started out with affirming the historical character of the events recorded in Leviticus and Numbers; but when he decided that the legislation of Leviticus originated in the exile, he was obliged to declare the narrative out of which it springs to be untrue, a fabrication of a later age.

The dominant school of critics are unable to adjust their theory to the general culture of the times; to the character of the Hebrew records which is established wherever it can be

tested; and, as will presently be seen, to the great national traditions. These are general considerations adverse to the Wellhausen theory. We now turn to certain particulars.

I. PROVERBS.

There are two sections of the book of Proverbs which are specifically ascribed to Solomon in the text itself, chapters 11-22:16, and 25:1 *sq.* The former is a collection of two-line maxims, entitled simply "Proverbs of Solomon;" the second bears the caption "Proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah copied out" or transferred. The sole authorship of these proverbs is not expressly ascribed to Solomon. The title may mean that or it may describe the proverbs as a collection of maxims partly composed and partly culled by Solomon. Whatever interpretation be put upon the titles, however, they ascribe to Solomon a literary activity and an interest in gnomic sayings, and affirm the existence of these maxims in Solomon's day.

Now what evidence exists either for or against the truth of the titles? 1. There is no difficulty in the way of the titles on the score of language. Pure Hebrew is used throughout. Foreign orthography and forms, such as characterize some of the later books of Hebrew Scripture, are absent. The language of these sections accords fully with the ascription of the maxims to Solomon. 2. Nor does any difficulty arise from the character of the contents of these sections. The lack of a polemic against idolatry has indeed been cited as evidence of a late date. The war against idolatry was hotly and unceasingly waged by the prophets during the period of the two kingdoms; but even in the section which the men of Hezekiah copied out, there is no reference to this intense struggle. Reuss interprets this fact to mean that the proverbs were gathered in post-exilic times, when idolatry had ceased to be a burning question. On the other hand this fact is equally favorable to the title. High places were tolerated during the century that preceded the erection of the temple, and idolatry was apparently not making serious inroads on the religion of Israel. It had done so

during the times of the Judges; and in the latter part of Solomon's reign, when his heart was not right with the Lord, he permitted his foreign wives to erect altars to their own gods. At that period of his life he was the last man to rebuke idolatry. In his earlier days he had no occasion to expressly do so. The proverbs present simply the right religious attitude. They recognize only Jehovah God. If the absence of an express polemic against idolatry proves anything it affords evidence that these proverbs were collected either before the division of the kingdom and the encroachments of idolatry, or else after the exile when idolatry had lost its attractiveness. 3. Pithy sayings were in great favor from ancient times. All schools of criticism admit that there was activity in this line before the division of the kingdom. Jotham's parable and Samson's riddle belong to this class. A proverb is quoted in 1 Sam. 24:13 as even then ancient. By the time of Solomon four men had acquired special note for wise remarks (1 Kings, 4:30). 4. The long and prosperous reign of Solomon afforded leisure for literary pursuits and for the collection of choice sayings. And to this period and to this king early and continuous tradition traces the collection and composition of proverbs. In the first book of Kings it is recorded that Solomon spake three thousand proverbs and that people came from all parts to hear his wisdom (4:32, 34; *cf.* 10:1); and the author of this book of Kings drew his facts from documents which he believed to be contemporary with the events (11:4; *cf.* 2 Chron. 9:29). The men of Hezekiah, who, there is no reason to doubt, were employed by Hezekiah himself, ascribed to Solomon a collection of proverbs from which they made extracts. See also Eccles. 47:13-17. 5. Now proverbs are not ascribed indiscriminately to Solomon. The maxims of others are known and credited. Samson, Jotham, Etham receive acknowledgment. Even in the collection known as the book of Proverbs the words of Agur and sayings of the wise are distinguished from those of Solomon. It is only fair to infer that there was reason for ascribing the two sections to Solomon.

II. PSALMODY OF DAVID.

A group of psalms was admitted by both Ewald and Hitzig to be Davidic (Pss. 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 19^a). Ewald admitted in addition Pss. 2, 20, 21, 24, 29, 32, 110; and Hitzig 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19^b. The Davidic authorship of these psalms is, however, denied by the latest critics. They have not discovered anything in them which Ewald and Hitzig did not see, but the evidence of literary activity which these psalms afford, the spirituality which pervades them, their reference to the law, and their recognition of but one place for Jehovah's worship are features which are incompatible with the Graf-Wellhausen theory. On ultimate analysis, this incompatibility is the sole difficulty with these psalms. To save the theory, the Davidic authorship is denied.

But tradition, not a late tradition, but ancient native tradition almost contemporary with David, both directly and indirectly, ascribes the composition of psalms to him. His fondness for music is recorded in the historical books; he played skilfully on the harp (1 Sam. 16:18-23; 2 Sam. 6:5), and he arranged the praise for the sanctuary (1 Chron. 6:31; 16:7; 41, 42; 25:1 sq.). He composed a lament over Saul and Jonathan, which was preserved in the ancient book of Jashar, and over Abner (2 Sam. 1:17-27; 3:33,34), a song of deliverances, and last words (22:1-51; 23:1-7). His musical activity is referred to by various authorities; Amos (6:5), Ezra (3:10), Nehemiah (12:24, 36, 45, 46), the son of Sirach (Eccles. 47:8, 9). Such work on the part of David accorded with the times. Religious poetry and penitential psalms had for ages been common among the Babylonians. Among the Hebrews, the Song of Deborah and the Wars of the Lord are admitted by the most radical of critics, like Stade, to be ancient. The composition of poetry belonged, therefore to the earliest period of Hebrew history. David as a psalmist was a product of forces long operative. The times of David, moreover, were calculated to call forth devotional literature; for the revival and reformatory work of Samuel had been in progress for a generation, the spirituality of religion had been

urgently insisted upon, interest in the sanctuary had been reawakened, and preparations were being made for the erection of a temple on a scale of great magnificence.

III. THE LAW OF MOSES.

The question at issue is fundamentally whether the social conditions presupposed by the legislation ascribed to Moses existed in his day or did not arise until many centuries later. This is the fundamental question. High ideals and profound political insight may not have been appreciated by the people whom Moses led. Political disturbances may have interfered with the regular course of law. The original institutions may have been rendered in part inoperative. These are possibilities, but they do not affect the question at issue. If the conditions presupposed by the legislation existed in the age of Moses, the unvarying and hoary tradition that he is the author cannot be impugned. The school of criticism at present dominant tells us that the conditions arose later and claims to be able to point out the time after the settlement in Canaan when they had not yet come into existence and the particular moment in history when they emerged. Our present purpose is to show historically that these conditions existed in the days of Moses, that there are traces of the essential features of the legislation in the times of Joshua and the Judges and during the undivided monarchy, and that the historical deviations from it are of one kind and explained by political necessity.

By way of preface it may be remarked that the question of the composition of the Hexateuch has no essential bearing on the present discussion. The dominant school is convinced that the four documents J, E, D, P, can be traced from Genesis to Joshua inclusive. At that point they cease (Kuenen). The dates assigned to them severally are determined by the critics in each instance according to the particular theory of the development of the legislation which is advocated at the moment.

The historical standpoint from which to view the question at issue is a triple one, namely: (1) The sojourn and servitude of the Hebrew people in Egypt and their deliverance was a tradition

imbedded in Hebrew thought. It is found in the earliest documents no matter what school of criticism pronounces on their date. The Jehovist records the descent of Jacob and his family into Egypt, their subsequent increase and enslavement, and their exodus in a body; and the narrative known as E has an equally definite account of the same events. Psalmists pitch their songs to its key and from it prophets draw their lessons. The standing type of God's redemptive power and love is Israel's deliverance of old from Egypt. Nor is the tradition peculiar to one tribe, as though but a portion of the Hebrew folk had endured Egyptian slavery; it is not exclusively Judæan, but it is Ephraimite as well. It is the record both of the Judæan Jehovist and the Ephraimite Elohist. The notable prophets of both kingdoms voice it; Isaiah among the hills of Judah and Hosea in the kingdom of Samaria (Isa. 11:16; Hos. 2:15, etc.). The tradition is the common property of all Israel, a landmark in their history. (2) Sinai was the scene of notable events. The fifth chapter of Judges is allowed by the dominant school to be a song contemporary with the events it describes. As early then, as the days of the prophetess Deborah, when the song was composed, the Israelites were filled with the thought that their forefathers had witnessed mighty manifestations of Jehovah at Sinai "when the mountains flowed down at the presence of the Lord, even you Sinai at the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel." (3) It was the firm conviction of the Israelites that Moses had been their leader, their lawgiver, and the organizer of their national life at this crisis in their history. This tradition appears in the documents which are the earliest according to all schools of criticism (J and E). It is also referred to by Samuel the prophet (1 Sam. 12:6, 8). It finds expression in the earliest writing prophets, both in the northern and the southern kingdom (Hos. 12:13, Mic. 6:4). It is a national imbedded tradition. Moses was a social, political, and religious organizer.

What legislation would naturally be enacted by a lawgiver under such circumstances. It must be abreast of the religious conceptions of the better spirits of the nation, abreast of the current sense of right and justice which prevailed in that age,

abreast of the palpable needs of the people concerned. In other words, whatever portion of the legislation was immediately enacted by Jehovah and whatever was revealed to Moses, as to later prophets, and whatever was of man's devising, it must all accord with the past history, present environment, and evident needs of the people.

The religious worship of that age was ceremonial. The ancestors of the Hebrew people in Babylonia and Mesopotamia, the family of Abraham in the mountains of Canaan, and the Israelite multitude in Egypt had been acquainted with ritualistic worship. Altars were erected, sacrifices classified. Men exhibited the greatness of God by the grandeur of his earthly temple and the splendor of ceremony. An ark was customary in the temples of Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt. In Egypt, further, the people were accustomed to a priestly class divided into several orders of different dignity. Annual pilgrimage to the temple, participated in even by those residing at a remote distance, was a feature of the Egyptian religion. This was the spectacle which had been before the eyes of the Hebrews for generations and which had shaped their conceptions of worthy worship. At Sinai they were fresh from Egypt. It is natural, therefore, to find in a prospectus of religious worship drawn up in Moses' day, an ark and, as the people were journeying, a tabernacle instead of a temple. On the theory of development, which is the theory urged by the dominant school, it is certain that a form of religion would be devised which would adequately meet the conceptions of the age and exhibit Jehovah with suitable honor in the sight of Israelites and foreign peoples. It is not surprising, therefore, that the main features of the legislation of the so-called priestly document are characteristics of the religious worship common to many nations in Moses' day. The cult of the age is reflected in the laws regarding tabernacle and priesthood and sacrifice.

The book of Deuteronomy contains a great address ostensibly delivered by Moses at Shittim. Thirty and eight years had elapsed since the body of the old legislation was given. The new generation, on the eve of advancing to the conquest of

Canaan, is summoned to hear the law of the nation, to be instructed in the application of its principles to the new circumstances which confronted the people, to have their apprehension of its spirituality quickened, and then intelligently to renew the covenant made with their fathers. The address was delivered in three installments, committed to writing, and solemnly ratified as a covenant. (1) The history of Israel since the covenant was made with the preceding generation at Horeb is reviewed as a motive for obedience to Jehovah's laws. (2) Statutes are rehearsed, with emphasis upon their spirituality and urgent insistence upon their observance. (3) Curses and blessings are announced. The characteristic features of this address are the insistence upon one altar for the nation and an adjustment of the laws in minor details to the anticipated settled life in Canaan and to the enlargement of Israel's borders brought about by the occupation of the country east of the Jordan. The fundamental features are the unity of the altar and the accommodation of the laws to the needs of people remote from the altar. The address is chiefly the thought of Moses. He quotes the words of the Lord, but his speech is his own. It is the wisdom of a tried statesman. He had experienced the jealousy of the princes and had discovered traces of tribal self-seeking, and he feels the need of a unifying element in the state. He had seen the attraction exerted by the licentious idolatry of the heathen upon the susceptible Israelites, and he dwells upon the need of exterminating the Canaanites, rooting out idolatry, and cherishing one sanctuary which shall outshine the local shrines of the idolaters. The address was intended to counteract the tendency to lapse into idolatry by preventing the people from worshiping at the numerous local sanctuaries of the Canaanites. It was intended to render the worship of Jehovah a greater spectacle and of greater pomp than the ritual of the Canaanitish idols by uniting all the people and drawing all their wealth to one sanctuary. It was intended to give strength to the communal feeling and bind the nation together.

There is no doubt that the legislation which bears the name of Moses accords with the spirit and the needs of his time.

With this great fact, the minor features harmonize. The language is free from late forms. It smacks also of the desert. The use of the term "the priests, the Levites" and reference to the tribe of Levi as priestly in a popular and untechnical address at a time when the Levitical priests were sharply distinguished from the lower order of Levites are quite common at all periods of the history (2 Chron. 23:18; 30:27; Ezek. 43:19; 44:15; and 1 Kings 12:31; Mal. 2:1-4; 3:3).

Upon what ground then does the modern dominant school base its opposition to Mosaic authorship? The fundamental reason alleged is that according to the history numerous altars existed and were considered legitimate for a considerable period before the erection of Solomon's temple. Is this acknowledged fact of history inconsistent with the enactment of laws by Moses regarding the unity of the altar? Our clear conviction is, that it was not. For first, sacrifices at a distance from the sanctuary were legal under specified circumstances. By law, they might be offered at any place where Jehovah manifested himself. Gideon and Manoah and others acted legally by sacrificing then and there on the appearance of the angel of Jehovah. And secondly, the numerous altars before the erection of Solomon's temple were abnormal. They were permitted because the central sanctuary at Shiloh had been forsaken by God. They were allowed from this time until Jehovah chose Zion. The covenant, of which the national cult was the legal expression, was known to be broken. If the people were to worship Jehovah at all, they must fall back on the primitive law. And thirdly, altars to Jehovah were recognized as legitimate among the northern Israelites. Political reasons made it impossible for the pious inhabitants of the north to make pilgrimages in a body to Jerusalem or even, except on rare occasions, to visit the central sanctuary individually, for worship and sacrifice. If godly Israelites in the north who regretted the schism and abominated the calves of Bethel and Dan and loathed the yet more outrageous Baal cult, worshiped Jehovah at all, it must be at their own private altars. And this right was recognized by the prophets of Jehovah (Eljah, Hosea, etc.).

The abeyance of the Mosaic legislation in all Israel from the time when Jehovah forsook Shiloh until he chose Zion, and later among the Israelites of the north, is satisfactorily explained. And this is all that requires explanation. Otherwise the history reflects the Sinaitic legislation.

With these broad historical considerations we rest the argument. It would be instructive to search the early national history of the Hebrews for traces of Mosaic legislation; but the pleasant task is forbidden by the authorized limits of this article and is rendered unnecessary by the investigations conducted by Dr. Green and published by him in "Moses and the Prophets" and "Hebrew Feasts." Dr. Green, however, omitted the book of Joshua from his survey in order to avoid the necessity of prolonged argument. But a glance into this book is appropriate, especially at those passages in it which the dominant school pronounces to be the earliest and ascribes to J or E. It appears that (1) The priesthood began with Aaron and descended to his son. Aaron's death and the induction of his son Eleazar into the priest's office in his stead are mentioned in Deut. 10:6. This statement according to Wellhausen is not a reminiscence of P (Proleg³, 388). According to Dillmann the passage has been introduced by the reviser from the Elohist. One of the oldest documents which the critics admit thus testifies to the priesthood of Aaron and after him of his son. The last verse in the book of Joshua is decided by Dillmann to belong to B (=E) and by Wellhausen to JE, again the oldest document. It states that "Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in the hill of Phinehas his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim." This record goes far to show that the Mosaic legislation was inaugurated and continued to exist for two generations at least, until the death of Joshua. And Phinehas was on hand to continue the priestly succession. This testimony from the oldest document allowed by the critics is confirmed by the knowledge of the burial-place. The grave, moreover, was in the hill country of Ephraim, and not in a city assigned to the sons of Aaron for residence. The towns designated to give lodging and glebe to the priests were in the south in Ben-

jamin, Judah, and Simeon. But Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was given a piece of property near Shiloh. This fact is no mean evidence that his presence was needed in that vicinity and is a strong indication that he was the chief priest whose attendance at the tabernacle was known to be a frequent necessity. In later years Eli found it desirable to even live in Shiloh, and the high priests eventually took up their residence in Jerusalem when the temple was erected. (2) The unity of the altar was recognized in the days of Joshua. The document JE, records that Gibeonites were condemned by the princes in the days of Joshua to render service at the house of the Lord and the altar of the Lord. This shows unity of worship. The existence of one altar for all Israel comes out also in another event of the time of Joshua. The erection of an altar by the returning soldiers of the tribes east of Jordan appeared to the Israelites on the west of the river to indicate a desire for separation. This implies that one altar existed for the entire nation. But their suspicions were allayed when word was brought back that the altar beside the Jordan was not designed for offerings, but was intended to serve as a witness that the eastern tribes may bring burnt offerings, sacrifices, and peace offerings before the Lord (Josh. 22 :11, 12, 26, 27; according to Dillmann B, *i. e.*, E).